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Pushing the Boundaries, Sketching the Future

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Our vision for the *Journal of Marketing Management* (JMM) has always been aligned to those of past editors (Baker, 1984-1999 and Hart, 1999-2010) in that we envisioned a Journal that is ambitious in content and innovative in approach and style. A Journal with its feet firmly embedded in the present; sensitive and true to where it has come from; but still open to its possible future(s), with a responsibility to stand at the forefront of marketing thought. A steady ship if you like, within the turbulent seas of academic endeavour and responsibility.

In this respect the 30th Anniversary issue grants us an excellent opportunity to celebrate the achievements of those who continue to aspire to publish in the Journal and the vision they bring to this endeavour of charting and rethinking marketing knowledge. In our first talk at the Academy of Marketing (2011) we placed emphasis on the importance of the Journal for the marketing community as a whole. The papers in the anniversary issue are a testament to the hard work and aspiration of this community. We hope the papers will continue to inspire our audience of academics, students and practitioners and act as thought-pieces to rethink marketing practice.

We open with Cova and Cova who chart the burgeoning work that is now conducted under the Consumer Culture Theory (CCT) banner. Such work aspires to bring insights from social theory for the understanding of contemporary consumption. In this regard, CCT is as much a community of practitioners as it is a philosophy and methodological toolkit for the understanding of consumption and its consequences. In this paper Cova and Cova highlight the main characteristics of this approach, its preferred contexts of applications and the metaphors of the consumers that it puts forward to challenge existing understanding of consumer behaviour. As Cova and Cova suggest: "...the power of CCT resides in its ability to look beyond managerial implications and suggests a kind of market intelligibility that should enable managers and other stakeholders to reorient their market actions without necessarily having to rely on simplistic or reductionist toolkits." Although the authors are not blind to the fact that such a vision can also lead to, what they term, an 'overheroicization' of consumers and thereby underestimating "capital's desire to maintain control over production and consumption, as well as producers and consumers by adapting its techniques of surveillance".

Our next contribution deals with the changing social and technological environment, rethinking and reflecting upon Russell Belk's seminal earlier studies of the extended self. In this paper Belk makes a case that the concept of the extended self still has utility even given changing environmental circumstances. He stresses we are still very much reliant on the body as the centre of our self-conception and traces how this influences the way we engage in the presentation of self in online forums. Despite the ability to engage in Proteus-like self-transformation, many of us produce avatars and other forms of self online in ways not dissimilar to our actual, physical selves.

In equal measure, he questions an earlier assumption that we possess some kind of core self, pluralising the self instead, and highlighting how a variety of novel theoretical perspectives including Actor Network Theory and the concept of the “extended mind” can be used to fertilise future research directions for consumer research. This paper sets the research agenda for digital virtual consumption studies for the foreseeable future.

Wells in her contribution to the special issue deals with the significant topic of behavioural psychology. She provides an historically situated exegesis of this area, unpacking the various perspectives such as classical conditioning and operant conditioning. Beyond these more well-known approaches the paper traces the emergence and development of applied behaviour analysis, consumer behaviour analysis, matching and foraging theories as well as the methodological approaches in common currency in this domain and concludes with a summary of future research directions.

Dibb delivers an incisive analysis of the social marketing literature to consider anew its origins, to problematise its assumptions but also restate its relevance and relationship to mainstream marketing as a way to better reshape its future and vision; as Dibb urges "Social marketers should have as their goal, the desire to bring the field to new contexts and social problems, to improve the quality of social marketing interventions" (this volume). Social marketing in this respect has always been bold and ambitious to take on the challenges that consumption and consumer culture brings in its wake. This paper like many within the volume does an excellent job of revisiting and reviewing previous work to open up debate around the research agenda that surrounds the social marketing endeavour. Its origins and development, its quest for legitimacy, along with a restatement of the challenges which transformations in society and the wider environment bring in their wake. The call is thus for social marketing to be ‘outward-looking and progressive’ in approach if it is to meet these challenges and foster greater collaboration with ‘behaviour change researchers’.

In a similar vein, McDonagh and Prothero engage with a topic that continues to be of great interest to marketing scholars and practitioners alike, namely sustainability. They provide a detailed review of the literature from 1998 until 2013, parsing this into five distinct themes. They review each in turn, offering suggestions for future research. Their work thus provides an exhaustive introduction to those wanting to know more about the current academic status of sustainability research and identifies appropriate gaps in the literature.

Alternatively a slightly different reading can be offered and this is a more pessimistic picture of research in this domain. From McDonagh and Prothero’s review it becomes clear that our apparently leading journals have very little to say about sustainability. This hardly seems appropriate given looming environmental crises. In traditional academic terms, therefore, much more research is required on this important topic.

Taking another prominent research area and offering us an account of its history, current status and potential future directions is Lisa O'Malley's contribution which deals with relational perspectives in marketing. Importantly, she deflates the idea that relationships are new to marketing – a position likely to raise a cheer from marketing historians – and traces the international contributions that have noted the prevalence of relational perspectives since well before the twentieth century.

O'Malley connects the historical analysis to recent turns in relational research noting the importance of the Industrial Marketing and Purchasing (IMP) group, the rise of network perspectives, Customer Relationship Management (CRM), brand communities, and Service Dominant Logic. Each of these perspectives raises questions about power relationships between producer and consumer, with the latter figure increasingly attributed with agency in marketing relationships.

Interestingly, O'Malley points out that the rise of network relationships has implications for the power we attribute to the marketing manager and individual firm. If a firm is part of a network, paying due attention to supply chain and competitor activities, then to what degree do they have agency in their decision-making? O'Malley suggests that this may be more limited than we have previously acknowledged. She concludes by offering a research agenda.

Our final contribution by Tadajewski and Jones serves to remind us all that being historically minded is sometimes a necessary requirement to broadening the scope and vision of our analyses of marketing thought and practice. The paper is illuminating and enlightening in equal degree. It engages with multiple literature streams that are likely to appeal to the varied constituents of the *Journal of Marketing Management* including more traditional managerial perspectives, through to culturally oriented Consumer Culture Theoretics research and on to Critical Marketing Studies. Their purpose is to provide a 30 year historical overview of the development of marketing management in order to move marketing thought forward through a deeper understanding of our collective past. They urge us all to be more historically minded to better embed and situate our analyses of the contemporary present of marketing management.

We hope that you find much value in the papers which make up this 30th Anniversary of the *Journal of Marketing Management*. It has certainly been a pleasure to be involved in the making of this volume and we thank our contributors, the expertise of the administrative team at the Journal (Anne Foy and Fiona Lees) and the thoughtful reviewers who continue to make the Journal a key platform for leading work in Marketing knowledge and understanding.